



Going UP!

White Flint plan calls for taller, denser dwellings

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By Philip Speake

In a unanimous vote the Montgomery County Council this week approved the White Flint Sector Plan after more than three years of work in establishing and planning the area's revitalization. Council President Nancy Floreen called it an "award-winning plan."

The plan, which is expected to take up to 30 years to implement, will add around 9,800 residents to the White Flint area, along with 2,600 affordable housing units. The development will cover about 480 acres of land surrounding the White Flint Metro station and will be focused on creating more mass public transit and allow residents and workers to leave their vehicles at home.

Many older commercial buildings will be replaced over time with larger mixed-use facilities, some of them 30 stories tall.

"This plan is a very good plan. A plan that moves us to sustainable development, environmentally appropriate development and at the same time protects our existing neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to White Flint," Councilman Roger Berliner said.

"Instead of seeing a sea of asphalt, we're going to have people walking the street," Berliner continued. "This is the future we imagine this plan bringing us, and I think we're all pretty excited about it."

White Flint is located in Berliner's district, and he also introduced an amendment making the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission review road conditions every two years so improvements will be made at necessary times.

The plan also consists of public gathering spaces, parks and options for entertainment venues. Also, Rockville Pike will be reconstructed as an "urban boulevard," with its utilities underground, buses, trees and a wider median for turn lanes. Wider sidewalks are also in the plan to promote walking.

"Passing the White Flint Sector Plan allows us to create a bright future for the White Flint area built around good jobs, effective transportation and the high quality of life we come to expect from Montgomery County," said Councilman George Leventhal, in a press release.

The full White Flint Sector Plan can be found at the Montgomery County Government Web site.

